

# Observing Student Work Protocol

The protocol (adapted from Project Zero's *Collaborative Assessment Conference*) provides a structure by which teachers come together to look at a piece of work, first to determine what it reveals about the student's achievement and then to consider how the teacher might improve on her/his approach.

## Preparation

- Teachers gather in groups of 3 or 4.
- One volunteers to be the Presenter. Each teacher will eventually have the opportunity to be the Presenter.
- The remaining teachers will be the Audience.
- The Presenter should be seated opposite the Audience, preferably on two sides on a table, not three or all four. The Presenter, then, becomes the clear focus.

## Guidelines

- When the Presenter speaks, the Audience simply listens.
- When the Audience speaks, they talk to each other and not directly to the Presenter.
- There should be no conversation or discussion between the Presenter and Audience. If the Audience asks a question, the Presenter can make note of it to answer later, during one of her/his sections.

## PART ONE: Context – Two minutes

- The Presenter gives basic context for the lesson s/he conducted that resulted in the student work that will be shown. Grade level, subject of focus, standards addressed, text used, and/or essential questions asked. The Presenter should not describe the student or student work, nor give any indication of how s/he graded or assessed the student's achievement.
- The Audience listens only.

## PART TWO: Observe/Describe – Four minutes

- The Presenter places the selected work where everyone can see it.
- The Audience first observes the work in silence.
- The Audience then simply describes what they see, without making judgments about the quality of the work or their personal preferences. (Avoid "I like" or "I don't like")
  - Describe what students are doing. If video, how they are responding?
  - What do you notice in the student's work that is interesting or surprising?
  - What do students seemed to have learned or come to understand or what did they appear to have accomplished?
- The Audience states any questions they have about the work, the child, the assignment, the circumstances under which the work was carried out, and so on.
- The Presenter may make notes, but does not respond at this point.

**PART THREE: Pose Dilemma – Two Minutes**

- The Presenter asks, “If I were to do this again, how can/might I...” The Presenter focuses on questions or challenges s/he encountered when teaching the lesson.
- The Audience listens only.

**PART FOUR: Discuss Dilemma – Four Minutes**

- The Audience turns to each other and discusses the dilemma. They do not directly address the Presenter, giving her/him the opportunity to simply listen and take notes. The Audience is free to offer any examples or make as many different suggestions as they desire.
- The Presenter listens only.

**PART FIVE: Present Thinking – Three minutes**

- The Presenter talks about any new insights or ideas that s/he gained from the conversation and what s/he might try in the future. The Presenter is not obligated to answer any questions previously posed.
  - What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
  - What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
  - How might you make use of your colleagues’ perspectives?
- The Audience listens only.

**Repeat the protocol for each teacher in the group, switching seated positions to clearly define who the Presenter is.**